



**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

March 10, 2017

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: 2017 Social Work Month

“Stand Up” and “Be the Change” are the themes for the March 2017 School Social Work Celebration. Both themes emphasize the roles school social workers play as agents of change. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), the School Social Work Association of America (SSWAA), the American Council of School Social Work (ACSSW), and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of school social workers during the month of March.

School social workers help to remove barriers to positive outcomes for children and youth by establishing working relationships between schools, families, and communities. They are specially trained to focus on the non-academic factors beyond the classroom that may impact a student’s capacity to learn such as social-emotional and family needs. They offer a range of supports for students facing these challenges by providing crisis intervention, counseling and mental health services, addressing truancy, and connecting families to community resources. School social workers improve the educational outcomes of students in need by lending the critical supports to help them reach their full potential.

Listed below are some suggested activities to assist school divisions in acknowledging school social workers:

- Sponsor a breakfast thanking school social workers for their support to students and staff
- Write a short description of school social work services in your division newsletter
- Have principals acknowledge school social work contributions during staff meetings
- Recognize the important role of school social workers at a School Board Meeting
- Send a thank you email to school social workers

Join VDOE in recognizing School Social Work Month and take a moment to encourage, support, and celebrate school social workers. Questions regarding school social work services may be directed to Dr. Vivian Stith-Williams, School Social Worker Specialist, via email at Vivian.Stith-Williams@doe.virginia.gov or telephone (804) 225-4543.

SRS/VSW/nlc